



HEADQUARTERS, 29TH INFANTRY DIVISION

LET'S GO

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HHC and STB celebrate with families

29th Infantry Division Rings in the Holiday

Soldiers and officers recognized for service

*By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
29th Infantry Division Public Affairs*

FORT BELVOIR, Va. — Units from the Virginia National Guard gathered all over the commonwealth this month at their home stations and armories to celebrate the holiday season with their families and comrades-in-arms. One unit in particular, the 29th Infantry Division, celebrated this year at the Fort Belvoir Community Club Dec. 7.

While the Soldiers of the 29th Division Headquarters, Headquarters Company and the Special Troops Bat-

talion held their morning formations outside the community club, family members were welcomed into the facility to escape the cold December chill.

After the formalities of the formations were finished, Soldiers were directed into the building where they mingled with friends and family while they waited to register and check in. After checking in for the holiday meal Soldiers and family were given a ticket for door prizes and the option to buy tickets for a 50/50 raffle drawing.

Upon being seated in the festively decorated ballroom the Soldiers and

their families were given a briefing on the importance of the Family Readiness Group, in times of deployments and the times between. "Their efforts are critical for this organization, for us

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Spc. Meghan Robinson shakes hands with Lt. Col. John Wranek after being presented with a certificate of appreciation for her outstanding performance while serving the 29th Infantry Division. Robinson is a human resource specialist in the personnel office of the 29th Division Special Troops Battalion. (Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, 29th Infantry Division Public Affairs)



Staff Sgt. Ryan Yancey makes a grand entrance to the ballroom of the Fort Belvoir Community Club. Yancey who played Santa Claus at this year's Division holiday meal is a Human Resource Specialist in the personnel office of the 29th Division Headquarters, Headquarters Company. (Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, 29th Infantry Division Public Affairs)

29th ID Hone Response Skills, Make Friends at Yama Sakura 55 in Japan

*By Maj. John H. Alderman IV
124th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

CAMP ASAKA, Japan — A task force of the 29th Infantry Division, composed of Virginia and Maryland National Guardsmen, conducted two weeks of training near Tokyo with the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force Dec. 2-14.

The training was part of Yama Sakura 55, an annual bilateral exercise between U.S. and Japanese forces.

The Guardsmen, led by Brig. Gen. Peter C. Hinz of Maryland, are responsible for the command and control of a division of simulated soldiers in a computer-generated Command Post Exercise, or CPX, that emulates an attack on Japan by a fictitious military threat. The Guardsmen must replicate the full range of staff work and coordination necessary to move the simulated units.

The goal, explains Hinz, "is to improve relations and improve our ability to work together as military units." Reaching that goal requires building relationships on a personal, as well as an operational level, with their Japanese counterparts.

"It's been an outstanding experience working with the Japanese and learning about how they run their operations," says Sgt. 1st Class Roy White, an intelligence sergeant with the division. "I hope one day to return and do it again."

The task force is redefining how the 29th Infantry Division staff works together to accomplish its missions. Many of the Guardsmen have recently deployed, but most are new to their current duty positions. And procedures are being updated to take advantage of new technological capabilities available to the unit.

Similarities

Japan's Constitution currently constrains the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force to missions that defend the Japanese people and ensure their security. This could mean natural disasters or external military threats. Hinz



Command Sgt. Maj. Fred Bruner of Richmond, Va., coordinates a mission with his counterparts in the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force. (Photo by Maj. John H. Alderman IV, 124th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

notes that this is operationally quite similar to the role that National Guard units play in the states.

"In addition to our federal mission to mobilize and defend the nation, we have state Defense Support to Civilian Authorities missions," explains Hinz. "So in case of natural disasters or catastrophic events, we perform a lot of the same missions to take care of our local citizens as does the Japanese Self Defense Force."

Both the National Guard and the JSDF serve in a support role to civil governments and agencies. And both must be able to work efficiently with organizations that may have dissimilar operating habits or procedures.

The Yama Sakura 55 scenario covers the full spectrum of military operations, from civil support to traditional frontline battles. Sometimes complex coordination is required, which means lots of lessons learned

that the 29th Division can apply to their state missions back home.

"We have to learn to work with our counterparts," says Hinz. "This truly is a joint, multi-government, multi-agency exercise. And when we have operations at the state level, we have to work with state governments and state agencies to do our missions."

Transformation

The 29th Infantry Division's lineage extends back to World War I, when the division was formed from units in Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia. The unit symbol — a blue and gray taijitu — symbolizes the unification of regiments that fought on both sides of the American Civil War.

The unit later led the amphibious assault on Omaha Beach on D-Day. Since then, the unit has served around the world, including in Kosovo and Bosnia.

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to survive," said Brig. Gen. Grant L. Hayden, division commander.

"Especially in a time of mobilization."

Following the traditional meal of turkey, ham, stuffing and all the fixings, the division and STB took the opportunity to recognize the efforts of the Soldiers and officers with awards and promotions. In addition to certificates of appreciation, the division commander and STB commander handed out their coins of excellence to deserving soldiers and civilians alike.

When the handshakes and applause from the pinning of medals and new insignia quieted the holiday meal concluded with the door prize give away and the 50/50 raffle. Door prizes such as coffee mugs and holiday plants were donated to the winners by

sections of the division and battalion staff.

Although the children were excited by the arrival of Santa Claus and the chance to tell him what they wanted for Christmas this year, that excitement may have paled in comparison to that of Spc. Jewell Hicks who won the cash prize of the 50/50 raffle. While Hicks was excited and surprised to win, possibly the most excited was her teenage son who exclaimed, "We won! We Won!"

With the holidays and 2008 at a close, it will be exciting to see what the new year will have in store for the 29th. "As 2009 comes we know we'll have lots of challenges ahead, but we are up to the task," said Lt. Col. James Wranek, STB commander.



Brig. Gen. Grant Hayden helps himself to some delicious holiday sustenance during the division holiday meal at Fort Belvoir's Community Club.

29th ID Welcomes new command sergeant major

*By Spc. Frances O'Brien
29th Infantry Division Public Affairs*

Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis A. Green joined the 29th Infantry Division Headquarters, Headquarters Company Nov. 1 to become the most recent division command sergeant major.

The 59 year-old Virginia native, who was promoted to Command Sgt. Maj. in 2004, has served as an infantryman in the Virginia National Guard for over 23 years, most recently as the post command sergeant major of Fort Pickett.

The division appointment is "humbling," said Green. "With the transformation, everything's changed. We're going in new directions," he added.

Green is looking forward to facing the leadership challenge of an organization undergoing change.

"I see the 29th as a big ship. The key is to try and see the ship in total," said Green. "It's crucial that we all support each other."

Recently Green met with other Sergeants Major from the Army at Fort Polk, La. to help them understand the importance of the National

Guard's role in the Global War on Terror, as well as their missions in support of homeland defense.

"They appreciate what we try to balance," said Green. "More and more, they understand and respect the challenge of handling civilian jobs and family while meeting the state and national missions."

Although Green lives in Hillsdale, Virginia with his wife, Paula, and three children, Stacy, Britney and Travis he remains loyal to his Bedford upbringing.

"I'm from a Bedford lineage," said Green. "I'm a Bedford boy at heart."

Biography:

Military Experience:

Nov. 2008-Present - Command Sergeant Major (29th ID)
Oct. 2004-Oct. 2008 - Command Sergeant Major (Post Command Sergeant Major)
Feb. 1999-Oct. 2004 - Infantry Company First Sergeant
Sep. 1994-Jan. 1999 - Indirect Fire Mortar Platoon Sergeant
1996-March 1999 - Detachment First Sergeant

1991-Aug. 1994 - Indirect Fire Section Leader

Sep. 1989-June 1990 - Recruiter

June 1987-Sep. 1989 - Indirect Fire Mortar Section Leader

Aug. 1986-June 1987 - Indirect Fire Section Sergeant

June 1986-July 1986 - One Station Unit Training II

May 1986-July 1987 - Squad Leader

July 1985-May 1986 - Infantryman

June 1985 - One Station Unit Training Major awards and decorations include:

Army Commendation Medal

Army Achievement Medal (2)

Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (2)

National Defense Service Medal (2)

Humanitarian Service Medal,

Armed Services Reserve Medal

NCO Professional Development (4)

Army Service Ribbon

Virginia National Guard Bronze Star

Virginia National Guard Commendation Medal

Virginia Emergency Service Ribbon-

Virginia National Guard Service Ribbon

Virginia National Guard Perfect Attendance Ribbon

Guardsmen lay the smack down!

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

FORT PICKETT, Va. — It could be said that learning to defend one's self is an important skill for anyone to learn, but for Soldiers it can mean the difference between life and death. That's why some Soldiers are being given the chance to learn or improve those skills in a controlled environment.

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard, alongside Army reservists and Guardsmen from Idaho, came to Fort Pickett, Va. to learn Modern Army Combatives skill level one certification from instructors from the 1st Battalion, 183rd Regimental Training Institute through the commissioning authority at Fort Benning, Ga.

The 40-hour course, which began Dec. 8 and ran through Dec. 12, is aimed at teaching Soldiers the basics of modern army combatives. The course focuses on styles of mixed martial-arts with many of the moves based on Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, or Gracie Jiu-Jitsu, a martial-art that focuses on grappling and especially ground fighting techniques with the goal of gaining a dominant position, using joint locks and choke-holds to force an opponent to submit or be knocked out depending on what submission method is used.

Throughout the phase the students learn 13 core movements. "The core dynamic is from Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. A lot of the things we teach, the name is changed to fit the dynamic of the Army's understanding," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert J. Homer, course manager. "The move is the same, the name is just changed."

Homer, as well as some of the students, has additional experience in MMA from civilian based training institutes. Homer, in addition to being level four trained by the Army, has been training for almost five years, and has trained in Tae Kwan Do and several other fields of MMA, but his main focus has been in BJJ.



Staff Sgt. Victor Beasley takes a defensive posture during training at the Army Modern Combatives, skill level one certification course at Fort Pickett, Va. Beasley is an Artilleryman with the Richmond-based A Co. 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery. (Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs)

He has even been trained by individuals from the Charles Gracie Academy in California.

"I had a feeling that it was a little bit different, a little more technical than civilian MMA," said Spc. Sur Thompson, a cook from E Co., 429th Forward Support Battalion, who has been training in Roanoke for some time now. "We don't get as technical as we do here."

Many of the moves he had learned before and had been executing in his personal training, but now he has learned *why* he was executing the moves in the first place, said Thompson.

All Soldiers are now required to learn basic combatives at Basic Combat Training, but the level one course takes the training to the next step and builds on the Soldier's understanding of the principals learned in basic training. The level one course is also a "train-the trainer" course, meaning graduates will then be certified to go back to their units and train Soldiers at the platoon level.

Upon completion of level one, Soldiers are then qualified to move on to level two.

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